RULES

AND

DIRECTIONS

HOW ALL

DISSENTERS

May Unite in

RELIGION,

AS IS

Eſtabliſh'd in the Church of *England.*

June 18th. 1689. This may be Printed. *R. M.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Samuel Keble* at the *Turks-Head* in *Fleetſtreet,* 1689.

Rules and Directions how all Diſſenters may unite in Religion, as it is eſtabliſhed in the Church of England.

THE Wiſeſt of Kings hath told us, that there is a time, and a ſeaſon for all things; a time to keep ſilence, and a time to ſpeak; and certainly now, if ever, the laſt time is not only convenient, but abſolutely neceſſary: And ſhould Man hold his Peace and neglect this Duty, even the Stone ſhould cry out of the Wall, and the Beam of the Timber ſhall Anſwer it: I offer theſe my Rules and Directions, how all Diſſenters may Unite in Religion, *&c.* to all in general; but more particularly to thoſe who are Diſſenters from the Church of *England*, and who ſeem to make a breach in the Conformity, and happy Unity of the Church; and by over-nice Scruples, cauſe a Schiſm and Rent in his Seamleſs Garment: 'tis to you that I now ſpeak as a Friend; for we ought not to be as Wolves and Dogs, ſnarling and ſnapping one at the other, but with all gentleneſs and freedom admoniſh one another; with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long ſuffering, forbearing one another in love. 'Tis the command of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is Love it ſelf, that we love one another; by it we are known to be his true Diſciples and Followers of him; and there can be no greater ſign of his love, than friendly to admoniſh one another of errors, and ſtraying from the Truth, and to aſſiſt the weak, to raiſe up thoſe that fall; to call to Unity and concord, and to ſtir up to peace and amity; *That we may be all of one mind, having compaſſion one*

of another. Love as brethren, being pitiful, being courteous, not rendring evil for evil, and railing for railing. 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9.

1. Since Separation and Division among Brethren proceeds from the cunning and malice of Satan, and the Priests and Jesuits of the Church of *Rome*, why should this Separation continue any longer in our *Israel*? Why should not every man put to his helping hand, to build up the walls of Unity; and the only way against this *Romish* Faction, lies in the firm union of the whole Protestant Profession; and there is nothing wherein there is the least probability that we can ever be all united, unless it be in the Church of *England*, as it stands by Law established, agreeable to the Rules of the Holy Gospel, consonant to the Doctrine and Practice of the Primitive Christians; and not only allowed, but highly honoured by all the Reformed Churches in the world.

2. Why do you dispute about Trifles only, (as you call them?) Is not the word of God truly dispensed in our Publick Churches? Are we not Brethren, and members one of another, have we not one Father, God? One Head, Jesus Christ; and there is but one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all. And are not our Sacraments rightly administred? Are not our Prayers free from scandal and irreverence? Are not our Doctrines clear of error and falsity?

3. Why then do you deny to hear, and Receive, where you may Communicate with a safe Conscience? As you may certainly do in ours; whose greatest Adversaries have not been able, after the most curious search they could make, to find out one thing in the whole Constitution which they could positively affirm to be forbidden; and till that can be made appear, we must still say that it cannot be unlawful.

4. As the form of Divine Service, contain'd in the Book of Common Prayer, which is now used in the *Church* of *England*,

England, conduceth ſomuch to the Edifying thoſe that uſe it; As may be ſeen in the Rules for our more devout behaviour in the time of Divine Service in the Church of *England*, lately Publiſhed to ſhew in what good order the Publick Service of the *Church* of *England* is, and the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of it, where its Rules are duly Obſerved. And it agrees exactly with the Rules of the *Apoſtles*, and is performed in *Engliſh*, the vulgar and common Language of the Nation, which every one underſtands: But in the *Church* of *Rome*, the Common People are made uncapable of being Edify'd by the Prayers of the *Church*, in that they are all made in Latine, a Language which they do not all underſtand. So that when they meet to worſhip God, there are ſeldom any in the Congregation that knows what is ſaid there except the Prieſt that reads it: But bleſſed be God for it, it is not ſo with us; For ours is truly Common Prayer, for it is written and read in that Language which is Common to all the Congregations in the Kingdom: So that no man that frequents our Publick Congregations, can ever plead Ignorance of any one Duty whatſoever: For if it be not his own fault, he may there be inſtructed in every thing which he that made him, requires of him.

5. Let the Benevolence and tender heartedneſs of ſo gracious a Prince, and King towards you, who tho he be of the Communion of the *Church of England* (yet has thought fit to give you ſome Eaſe and Liberty ſo that you may the better prepare your ſelves to Unity in that Holy Religion in the Church of *England*) move you to a ready and Ingenuous Compliance.

6. How happy and Bleſſed then would the Nation be in this Unity; And how much Security would it give to three Kingdoms! And how much Content and Satisfaction to your Prince, and how much Joy, and Gladneſs, to the hearts of all your Brethren: what Peace ſhould we enjoy at Home! what Eſteem and Awe ſhould we purchaſe abroad! what

Love

Love would be begotten between one another? And what Happineſs and Proſperity would it bring to all! You would then ſee again thoſe happy days of Queen *Elizabeth*, our Armies to proſper, our Citizens to flouriſh, Conqueſt abroad, and Peace at Home, Charity to increaſe, and Contention to ceaſe; Love to abound, and ſtrife to wax leſs. The golden Age would ſeem to be return'd again, and Righteouſneſs would run down like a ſtream; there would then be a general rejoycing in our ſtreets, and we ſhould all cry out, *This is the Lords doing; it is marvellous in our Eyes*

7. Endeavour, to ſatisfy your Conſciences, go about it in good earneſt, lay aſide all Spiritual Pride, all ſelf-Intereſt, let the Caſe be ſtated truly by you: There are thoſe that have not thought much to convince you, if Scripture and Reaſon will do it.

For I have Obſerved, that of Late ſeveral Divines of the Church of *England*, for to recover Diſſenters to the Communion of the Church have undertaken the moſt Material Caſes of Conſcience that you do queſtion; and have handled them with that Candour and Calmneſs which becomes their profeſſion, and the gravity of the Arguments, and which may the better invite thoſe that are willing to be ſatisfyed, to peruſe and conſider them. The Names are as follows.

1. *A Perſwaſive to the Communion of the* Church *of* England.
2. *A Diſcourſe about Edification.*
3. *Caſes of Conſcience of Church Communion.*
4. *The Caſe of indifferent things uſed in the worſhip of God.*
5. *Certain caſes of Conſcience reſolved concerning the lawfulneſs of joyning with forms of Prayer in publick worſhip, in* II. *parts.*
6. *The Caſe of mixt Communion.*
7. *The Caſe of kneeling at the Holy Sacrament in* II. *Parts.*
8. *A Diſcourſe of Profiting by Sermons.*
9. *The Caſe of Lay Communion with the* Church *of* England.
10. *The Caſe of Infants Baptiſme.*
11. *The Caſe of the Croſs in Baptiſme conſidered.*

12. *Conſiderations about the Caſe of Scandal or giving offence to weak Brethren.*

13. *The charge of Scandal and giving offence by conformity, refelled and reflected back upon ſeparation.*

14. *A Letter to* Anonymus *in anſwer to his three Letters to Dr.* Sherlock *about Church Communion.*

15. *The Vindication of the Caſe of Indifferent things,* &c.

16. *A Diſcourſe concerning conſcience in* II. *Parts.*

17. *A Diſcourſe about a Scrupulous conſcience containing ſome plain Directions for the cure of it.*

18. *An Anſwer to the Diſſenters Objections againſt the Common-Prayers*

19. *The reſolution of this Caſe of Conſcience whether the Church of* England, *ſymbolizing ſo far as it doth with the Church of* Rome, *makes it unlawful to hold Communion with the Church of* England.

Read but theſe Caſes of Conſcience and then no doubt but your Scruples may be all reſolved, and you may Conform with ſatisfaction,

But to compleat our happineſs you muſt come to his holy Temple and pray together with us, and that will compleat this Unity, and Friendſhip. We have been too long aſunder, why ſhould there be any difference between *Benjamin* and *Judah*? Let us meet, I ſay, at laſt as Brethren; come with willing hearts and minds, the *Goliah* of oppoſition may be eaſily ſlain; one ſingle ſtone will ſink that *Philiſtine*. Let ſome among you ſet an example, others will follow. Conſider the Peace of *Iſrael* more than your own Intereſt, and think how you will ſtrengthen the hands of your Brethren by this ſo much deſired Unity and happy Conformity. Let at laſt the great mercy that is ſhewn you be a motive to bring you to this deſired and happy Unity, let love draw you and delay no longer; but let us meet with kindneſs and ſubmiſſion.

9. Lay theſe things ſeriouſly to your heart, paſs them not ſlightly over, and let it move you to pitty at laſt to ſee the Ghaſtly wounds that are ſtill renewed by the continuance of our Diviſions, let us have ſome compaſſion on a bleeding Church that is ready to faint, and in eminent danger of being made a prey to her Enemies, by the unnatural heats and animoſities

sities of those that should support and defend her, for it is said in the Vindication of the Conforming Clergy. *Pag.* 50. *The Church of* England *is a Body of so firm a Constitution, and so excellently temper'd, and so well shap'd, and of so clear a strength and vigour in all its Limbs, that no outward force is able to injure it, nothing but some inward corruption and decay in the Vital parts that can possibly bring it to the ground.*

10 Let us shew that we are inclined unto Peace, by coming as far as we can; and let not our groundless scruples at a Ceremony or two, fright us from the whole Worship of God, against which we have not any Exceptions: Be united in mind, be of one heart, worship together, separate no longer, and God will build you up: Then God will be known in *Judah*, and his Name will be great in *Israel*. You shall then be united like *Israel* and *Judah*, you shall have but one King, you shall be no more two Nations. What Nation will there be so great, who hath God so nigh unto them! Then you shall be his people, and he will be your God; he will give you one heart, and one way, that you may fear him for ever for the good of you and your Children after you. Then will ye with one mind and one voice glorifie God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We and you, all of us hope to attain the same End of our Faith; a *Heavenly Canaan*, is all our Journeys end; *we are Brethren, why should we fall out by the way?* Why all this noise? it will not, it cannot be long e're we all lye quiet in our Graves; thence we hope all to pass to such a state, where there will be nothing but Unity, Uniformity, and Harmony; where a full Choir of Saints, in a Beautiful Church Triumphant, and a Noble Hierarchy of Angels shall sing *Allelujahs*, and worship God in the Beauties of Holiness for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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